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Testimony of
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Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging

Planning and Development Committee

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Senators Osten and Cassano, Representatives Miller and D'Agostino, and esteemed members of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is Julia Evans Starr, and I am Executive Director for Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging. I thank you for this opportunity to comment on Senate Bill 677, An Act Establishing Tax Incremental Financing Districts.

As you know, Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging is the non-partisan, public policy and research office of the General Assembly, devoted to preparing Connecticut for a significantly changed demographic and enhancing the lives of the present and future generations of older adults. For over twenty years, the Legislative Commission on Aging has served as an effective leader in statewide efforts to promote choice, independence and dignity for Connecticut's older adults and persons with disabilities.

Senate Bill 677, An Act Establishing Tax Incremental Financing Districts

As you know, tax increment financing is a funding mechanism where anticipated future increases in property taxes are used to repay debt issued for current development and redevelopment. In its final form, the proposed legislation would make tax increment financing more readily available to communities for a wider variety of projects, especially those involving mixed-use and transit-oriented development.

Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging **supports** any efforts to broaden financing options for communities seeking to make their communities more livable for residents across the lifespan, a charge becoming increasingly salient as Connecticut undergoes a permanent and historic transformation in its demographics. Connecticut is the 7th oldest state in the nation with the 3rd longest-lived constituency. According to our analysis, between 2010 and 2040, Connecticut's population of people age 65 and older is expected to grow by 57%, compared



only 2% growth in the population age 20 to 64.¹ Moreover, we know from our research that Connecticut residents overwhelmingly want to stay in their homes and communities as they grow older, retaining choice, independence and dignity.

Accordingly, there's a growing urgency to begin planning for changing Connecticut communities, one that will need affordable, accessible and diverse housing and transportation options and public spaces and buildings, supportive community features and services, and vibrancy and opportunities for community engagement. In response to these trends, this General Assembly had the vision to enact Public Act 13-109, charging the Legislative Commission on Aging with spearheading an initiative to shape places that can support Connecticut residents across the lifespan. Following our statutory charge², we're working with diverse partners (at the local, regional, state, national and even international level), connecting related initiatives, and promoting ideas, innovations and resources.

As we increasingly provide consultation to communities in this broad-ranging livability work, one key theme that keeps emerging is the need for additional resources to fund the ideas and innovations community leaders wish to implement. In this challenging fiscal climate, we embrace tax increment financing as one strategy to help shape places that are more able to keep residents connected with economic opportunities, medical services, community and civic centers, and social opportunities, among other goals. This work becomes more critical than ever as the Commission on Aging continues its long-standing efforts to ensure that long-term services and supports are increasingly delivered in home and community-based settings, saving the state millions of dollars each year.

In your consideration of Senate Bill 677, you recognize the importance of continued efforts to expand tools to aid all of Connecticut's communities not only in their revitalization efforts, but to prepare for a growing and an increasingly long-lived population of older adults. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

¹ Connecticut's Legislative Commission on Aging. Connecticut for Livable Communities. A Report Pursuant to Public Act 13-109, to the Connecticut General Assembly's Committees on Aging, Housing, Human Services and Transportation. July 1, 2014. <http://www.livablect.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Annual-Report-2014-FINAL-2.pdf>. Accessed February 10, 2015.

² Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-420